Humanitarian Information Unit

HIU Highlights Report No.8
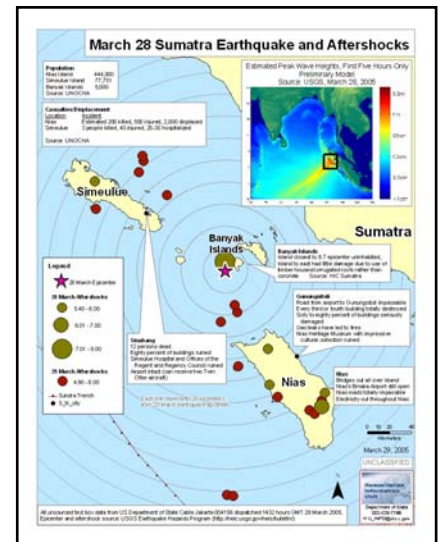# Feb. 1, 2005 – Mar. 31, 2005

The Humanitarian Information Unit serves as a USG interagency center to identify, collect, analyze, and disseminate unclassified information critical to USG decision makers and partners in preparation for and response to humanitarian emergencies worldwide, and to promote best practices for humanitarian information management

This report describes select initiatives underway, recent collaborations, key meetings, and upcoming items of interest. All products mentioned in this report are available on the HIU website. See last page for log on information.

Status of Select Initiatives:

March 28 Sumatra Earthquakes

The HIU produced a map pinpointing the epicenter of the 8.7 scale earthquake, along with 15 major aftershocks over the next two days. This map included an inset from USGS showing the southwesterly direction of the generated seismic sea wave, as well as text boxes summarizing the human and infrastructure impact and listing immediate assistance providers. The HIU also quickly established an eRoom (virtual work space) for this disaster, where State Department, USAID, DoD, and USGS personnel could access and share information. If you need access to the Earthquake eRoom, please contact Dennis King, KingDJ2@state.gov.

Indian Ocean Tsunami Update and Lessons Learned

HIU Geospatial Analyst, Kathleen Miner, returned on March 21, 2005 from Banda Aceh, Sumatra, where she spent two months helping to establish and lead the UN's Humanitarian Information Center (HIC) in response to the Tsunami disaster. Since UN OCHA first set up a HIC in 1999 in Kosovo, HICs have been deployed in support of humanitarian crises in Eritrea, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Darfur. HICs are a UN common service facility and provide support to the entire humanitarian community. The HIC in Sumatra worked with local and international NGOs, bilateral aid agencies, and the UN and other international organizations. These organizations utilized the technical capabilities and collaborative environment provided by the HIC. The HIC Sumatra reception kiosk was heavily used by more than 200 visitors per day in mid-January dropping to about 150 visitors per day by the end of February. Valuable products produced by the HIC included lists of contacts and activities and maps and spreadsheets of
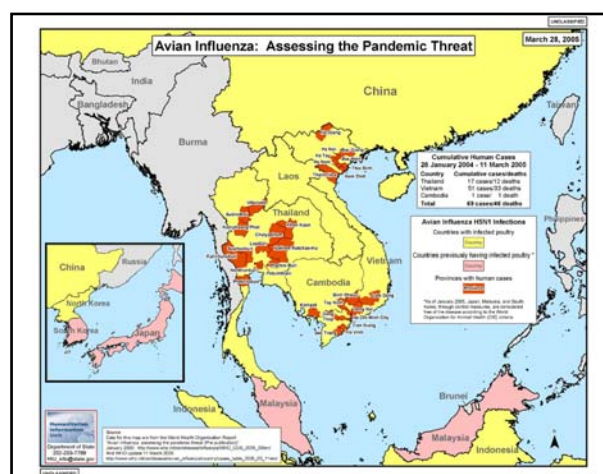
damaged areas and project locations. For more information on UN HICs log on to www.humanitarianinfo.org. For more information on the Sumatra HIC log on to www.humanitarianinfo.org/sumatra. (POC: Kathleen Miner, MinerKR@state.gov)

Based on the tsunami experience, the HIU has been compiling lessons learned and best practices related to collecting and providing data, information, imagery and GIS products, both for the field and at the headquarters level. These lessons learned are being shared with target audiencesso that they may be factored into integrated planning, procedures, and preparation for future responses to complex disasters and emergencies. (POC: Dennis King, Kingdj2@state.gov).

Avian Influenza Epidemic

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5N1) infected poultry in nine Asian countries last year. Human cases have occurred in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand. Although it is not yet contagious from person-to-person, many scientists fear that through adaptive mutation or genetic re-assortment it may become the cause of the world's next influenza pandemic. This HIU map, and an accompanying assessment, was used to inform senior USAID and State Department officials
(POC: Deborah Belsky, BelskyD@state.gov).

Populations at Risk Information Project

The Population at Risk Information Project (P@RI) continues to move forward and sufficient funds have now been secured to initiate the planned National Research Council (NRC) study. The P@RI project is an HIU-led interagency initiative stemming from recognition that the USG needs better capability to more accurately estimate and make effective use of sub-national population information in crises-prone countries. Development of the prototype country decision support packages, designed to demonstrate the value of more accurate sub-national demographic information in responding to crises, is underway and is expected to be completed by mid-May, whereupon the NRC will receive it. The final version of the country package requirements documents has been posted in the P@RI eRoom. (POC: Lewis McCulloch, McCullochLD@state.gov)

Emergencies without Borders

HIU has developed a presentation called "Emergencies Without Borders" that monitors and maps humanitarian indicators for the entire continent of Africa. A series of maps plot data

indicators at a sub-national or transnational level, rather than the usual depiction defined by a country's borders. Among the humanitarian data plotted on the map of Africa are natural disaster events in 2004, HIV prevalence, selected child mortality rates, complex emergency affected areas, and refugee camp locations, areas of displacement, and conflict incidents in 2004. This presentation was shared with S/CRS and others (POC: Dennis King, KingDJ2@state.gov)
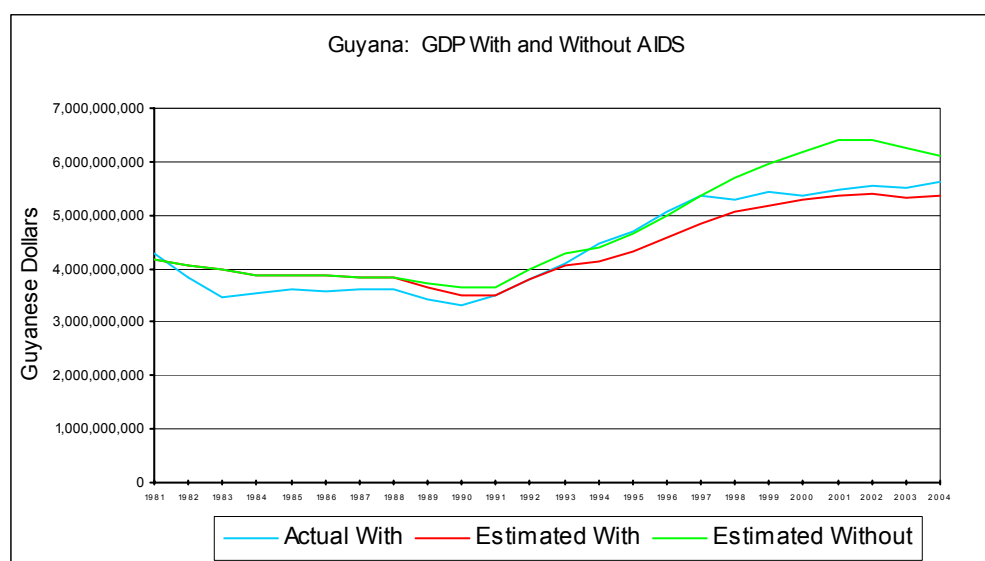
Attacks in Darfur

Using HIU's text mining software, HIU prepared a chronology of attacks and incidents of violence that took place in Darfur, Sudan between November 2004 and March 2005. These data were prepared for the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs, and shared with the NGO Coalition for International Justice. (POC: Dennis King, KingDJ2@state.gov)

Collaboration Efforts:

Economic Impact of HIV/AIDS

The HIU has now completed econometric models showing the effect of HIV/AIDS on GDP for Guyana, Haiti, Botswana, Mozambique and Uganda. HIV/AIDS has had little impact on economic output in Guyana (shown below) and Haiti, largely because of low prevalence rates of 5-6%. By contrast, Botswana is the extreme example of the economic impact of HIV/AIDS because it has the highest prevalence rate: 37%. Modeling assistance and comments were received from USDA/ERS, INR/R, USAID, the World Bank and the Futures Group. USAID's Africa Bureau has expressed interest in learning more about HIV/AIDS GDP analyses performed by the HIU as it is in the process of revising its Strategic Plan. (POC: David Dodson, DodsonDL@state.gov)

Unified Quest (UQ 05) Staff Exercise II (STAFFEX II)

The HIU DoD liaison attended STAFFEX II, hosted by US Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) as a member of the joint task force Joint Interagency Coordinating Group (JIACG) from February 14-18, 2005 at the Booz Allen Hamilton Campus in Tyson's Corner, Virginia. The focus of STAFFEX II was on planning to mitigate the impact of military operations on civilian populations and to educate the staff on the importance of best practices for conducting joint and interagency humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. This exercise was a precursor to the upcoming UQ 05 exercise, scheduled to be conducted at the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania May 1-6, 2005. The JFCOM exercise headquarters has agreed to provide HIU with necessary data on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in order for the HIU to develop unclassified GIS products in support of the JIACG for the UQ 05 exercise. (POC: Doug Nash, NashDE@state.gov)

Participation in the Training Transformation Interagency, Inter-governmental, and Multinational Mission (TIM2) Essential Tasks Workshop

The second interagency community conference for the Training Transformation Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational Mission Essential Tasks (TIM2) Task Force, part of DOD's Training Transformation Program, took place February 24-25, 2005 at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center in Arlington, VA. The conference, co-hosted by DoD, State, and Homeland Security, is part of DoD's continuing transformation effort to facilitate more inclusive joint operations. The conference focused on enhancements achievable through more effective communication, coordination, and interoperability among members of the interagency community - both domestic and overseas. Conference participants included USG agencies, the homeland and national security interagency community, as well as representatives from international NGOs. (POC: Doug Nash, NashDE@state.gov)

HIU Visit to the UN - Humanitarian Information Management

HIU Director, Alan Davis, and Humanitarian Affairs Analyst, Dennis King, traveled to New York February 28 – March 1, 2005 to discuss humanitarian information management issues with the US Mission, UN OCHA, UNICEF, Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), Overseas Development Institute, and NYU Center on International Cooperation. (POC: Alan L. Davis, DavisA@state.gov)

UNHCR GIS Workshop

The HIU participated in and presented a paper at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) GIS Workshop held in Cairo, Egypt March 13-15, 2005. This workshop allowed the HIU to network with UNHCR officers and to learn how UNHCR is using GIS in the field. The HIU presentation explained how the HIU was involved in the Darfur crises, and

demonstrated a prototype "Camp Management Tool" using ArcGIS 9.0. The HIU provided ten CDs of data (shapefiles) and DigitalGlobe Quickbird imagery of UNHCR refugee camps in Eastern Chad. (POC: Heather Phelps, PhelpsHA@state.gov and David Springer, SpringerDT@state.gov)

Other Items of Interest

HIU Visit to Joint Forces Command (JFCOM)

HIU Director, Alan L. Davis, accompanied DoD Assistant Secretary for Network Information and Integration (NII), Dr. Lin Wells and his Chief of Contingency Support and Migration Planning, Brian Fila to JFCOM offices in Suffolk, Virginia on March 15-16, 2005. They were briefed on various JFCOM initiatives, efforts underway by the joint interagency coordination group, and discussed cooperation between HIU and NII on gaming and exercises.

HIU Briefing at USAID Senior Staff Meeting

On March 31, 2005, HIU Director, Alan L. Davis, made a presentation to the USAID Administrator and other USAID Senior Staff describing the HIU's role, capabilities, initiatives and recent products. Copies of this presentation are available on the HIU website.

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